DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 201 CE 063 600

TITLE	Reflections: Thoughts of Delegates to the Iowa Adult Literacy Congress (2nd, Des Moines, Iowa, September 10-12, 1992).
INSTITUTION	Iowa State Dept. of Education, Des Moines.
PUB DATE	Feb 93
NOTE	45p.; This Congress was also sponsored by the Iowa Literacy Council and Iowa's Community Colleges.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; Autobiographies; Basic Skills; Education Work Relationship; *Interpersonal Relationship; *Leadership; *Literacy Education; Personal Narratives; *Reminiscence; *Self Esteem; Success
IDENTIFIERS	*Iowa

ABSTRACT

This publication contains two types of materials generated by the Second Iowa Adult Literacy Congress. Part I consists of summaries of four sessions during which the 40 delegates discussed and offered suggestions on 4 topics: leadership, changes in relationships, self-esteem, and literacy in the workplace. Part II presents special life stories of the delegates, some written before the congress and some following. The thoughts of the delegates are intended to encourage others with reading problems to seek help and create a public awareness and understanding of what it is like to struggle with the written language and symbols. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Reflections

Thoughts of Delegates to the Second Iowa Adult Literacy Congress

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

MJ Smith

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Reflections

Thoughts of Delegates to the Second Iowa Adult Literacy Congress

September 10-12, 1992
Des Moines, Iowa

Iowa Literacy Council
Iowa Department of Education
published February 1993

State of Iowa
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Ron McGauvran, President, Clinton
Betty L. Dexter, Vice President, Davenport
C. W. Callison, Burlington
Marcia Dudden, Reinbeck
Thomas M. Glenn, Des Moines
Corine A. Hadley, Newton
Francis N. Kenkel, Defiance
Gregory D. McClain, Cedar Falls
Ann W. Wickman, Atlantic

ADMINISTRATION

William L. Lepley, Director and Executive Officer
of the State Board of Education
Mavis Kelley, Special Assistant

Division of Community Colleges

Joann Horton, Administrator
Harriet Custer, Chief, Bureau of Educational
and Student Services
Miriam Temple, Consultant, Adult Education

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

The Department provides civil rights technical assistance to public school districts, nonpublic schools, area education agencies, and area schools to help them eliminate discrimination in their educational programs, activities, or employment. For assistance, contact the assistant chief, Bureau of School Administration and Accreditation, Iowa Department of Education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	1
Session Summaries	3
Leadership	5
Relationships	7
Self-Esteem	8
Workplace	10
Personal Reflections	13
David Schroeder	15
Ruth Scott	15
Rosemary Young	16
William E. Bass	16
Steven D. Bartmann, Sr.	17
Kenton Franke	18
Charles Ramsey	18
Clifford R. Pracht	19
Sharon K. Smith	20
Joe Rebarcak	21
Kathy Carlson	22
Alissa Walker	23

Page

Karen J. Cirks 24

Erik L. Nord 25

Kenneth Dale Warren 26

Gerald Eitzen 27

Abdo Al Jamal 27

Marie Lynch 28

Ray Mancillas 28

Theoma Osborn 29

Judith Card 30

Jeannie Barker 30

Tami Norton 31

Sandra F. Luck 31

Rodney King 32

Joann Foreman 32

Robert Sereg 33

Glenn Storm 33

Ronda L. Snelling 34

Cindy Gwinn 35

Lynn Groethe 35

Boalee Galle 36

Page

Bobby L. Jenkins 36

Linda Bruce 37

Steven Ellis 38

Archie Willard 39

Mazell Reed 39

Linda Sánchez 40

Tom Franksain 41

FOREWORD

On September 10-12, 1992, forty delegates to the second Adult Literacy Congress met to discuss and offer suggestions on four topics: Self-esteem, Changes in Relationships, Leadership, and Literacy in the Workplace. As the discussions developed and experiences were shared, the new adult readers (delegates) quite naturally felt a common bond with each other. The summaries of these sessions are included in this publication.

Reflections also includes special life stories of the delegates. Some were written before the congress and some following. Each contributor indicated a desire to share his/her thoughts with the general public. Through this publication, the delegates want to encourage others with reading problems to seek help, convey the message that they too "have been there", and create a public awareness and understanding of what it is like to struggle with the written language and symbols.

In addition to the Iowa Literacy Council, this congress was sponsored by the Iowa Department of Education and Iowa's Community Colleges. The congress was supported by Glacier Vandervell, Inc., North Central Federation of Labor, Con Agra Frozen Foods Council Bluffs, the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Iowa Department of Education.

For information about delegates available for speaking engagements or a seven minute videotape featuring The Second Iowa Adult Literacy Congress, contact the Iowa Literacy Council, Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319 or call (515) 281-3640.

"I believe that if Iowa continued to support and build self-confidence in adults that are illiterate, we'd have a more happy, willing and healthier environment for all concerned."

—A delegate

Part I:

SESSION SUMMARIES

*"It (the congress) was a great learning experience. . .
I did enjoy the sessions and felt better about
myself after attending."*

—A delegate

**As expressed by the delegates to the
Second Iowa Adult Literacy Congress about**

**–Leadership
–Relationships
–Self-Esteem
–Workplace**

LEADERSHIP

How can we be leaders for literacy with our friends and family?

Leadership is to make others understand what you are trying to do. When friends don't know you can't read, be honest and let them know. We need to explain to friends and family that we are not handicapped, not retarded, that we are indeed intelligent individuals. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses, so don't be ashamed.

Talk to the family member who has made up his/her mind that you can't learn to read. We need to look for support from family and friends.

Literacy is very important to the financial support of a family or individual. Explain to the family that learning to read can help get a better job.

How can we be leaders for literacy where we go to class?

Be open to the teachers and others there. The new literacy candidate must want to improve his/her writing. Cliff helps others in math because he is good in that. Each literacy student must ask for help. The longer you wait, the more difficult it gets to begin the literacy process.

Develop a good relationship with your tutor. Tell the teacher/tutor when you don't understand. Show up at group meetings. Those who prefer individual tutoring can benefit from meeting with the whole group perhaps once a month. Start support groups. It's hard to talk at first, but after while you learn not to be afraid. Help/support those new students by explaining that they needn't be ashamed. Also consider the children in the educational system in terms of what we can do to help them.

How can we be leaders in Iowa?

Be involved. Be a do-er –in clubs, churches, drug treatment programs. Send letters to political leaders. Ask for more tutors. Tell employers about the literacy problem and try and convince them that they can do something about the problem, that the problem really does exist. Get people to know about literacy programs through TV, radio, newspapers, word-of-mouth. Get companies together to find out about literacy. Start programs at work. Give talks to community groups. Work for more publicity on radio and TV to let people know. Encourage pictures on billboards (like the one with the father reading to his son).

How can we help others to be leaders?

Tell others about the program. Make it fun. Encourage them to attend classes. Get in touch with people who can't read. Tell others your own story. Motivate other people. Tell others where to get help.

We can recognize others who can't read because we ourselves have hidden it and can recruit others who have the same experiences. We can help recruit other students to make use of the resources available. It is very important to take pride in what you are trying to do. Be a model for others by being the best student possible. Encourage others to accept the challenge.

RELATIONSHIPS

How does literacy affect our relationships?

Studies have shown that many marriages end when one person learns to read. Marriages are sometimes based on dependencies. Relationships are hard to keep for any long period of time. This is true for those relationships that are entered into because of dependency.

You need people who believe in you, but won't hold you down. Relationships should not be based on what we can get from the other person. Some people enter into relationships for the wrong reason. We should have a relationship because we understand each other. New readers are afraid of the reactions of others when it is "found out" that they can't read. Talk to a tutor or teacher about how to tell someone or when to tell someone about your reading problem.

How can we help ourselves as we relate to others?

If you help yourself, you will be able to help others. You need to accept responsibility for yourself. If you learn to do things on your own, others won't take advantage of you. If you cannot read, you are dependent on other people. It is hard to become your own person.

How can we help others with low reading skills?

Encourage others; tell them to do the best they can. People who are new readers are in the best position to encourage others. New readers are the best at getting through to others who can't read. Talk to other employees.

SELF-ESTEEM

How does self-esteem help in literacy?

To be able to say I need help. Not denying that you don't understand; to share this advice (knowledge) with kids in school now.

Proud to be able to do things oneself.

What helps to build self-esteem?

Having someone care

Being recognized for what you can do well

Being part of a supportive, loving family

Having faith in God

Believing in yourself

Having support and love of others

Realizing that others are scared - you're not alone

Being accepted

Learning from life

What can we do to help build self-esteem?

Tell those who we were abusive to that we're sorry

Reinforce the good

Be involved in schools - know what's going on - children need to receive help as soon as problem is known - parents need to participate in child's education

Give compliments to others

Concentrate on the positve

Get the anger out

Help others

Forgive others

Do the best of your ability

Learn new things; it will make you feel good

Be able to show something you're good at

Encourage people to use their special talents

How can we deal with anger that comes from our past experiences?

Do physical activity - involve yourself in sports
Talk to someone who will listen without being judgmental; you need to talk it out
You need support of others
Pray for help in forgiving those who didn't help you
Concentrate on happy thoughts
Laugh
Talk to a friend
Try to understand why things happened the way they did
Work on forgiving others

WORKPLACE

How does literacy affect us in the workplace?

People are often denied job advancements because they can't read or write well enough. Sometimes threatening to sue for discrimination will get the position.

Common problem: employee may be actually doing the job, but doesn't get the promotion on paper because he/she can't read.

Some companies are willing to help employees to read because they realize they can gain by helping employees. Employees must realize it is to their advantage to let employers know they need help in learning to read. By coming to grips with the problem , it helps with all aspects of your life because you're not trying to hide something.

Changes at work are hard when jobs require more reading.

What can be done to promote literacy in the workplace?

Educate employers to identify and support non-readers by encouraging them to seek help.

Use TV and radio to reach the non-reader.

Seek union help and support to place workplace literacy on the bargaining table.

Educate employers to assist and encourage literacy in the workplace.

Encourage and support research on the retention of functionally illiterate in the workplace. The years of service in a single occupation for the control group (illiterate), us. The average number of years for an employer for the aggregate workforce may reveal some significant employment retention relationships.

Develop methods to promote literacy through the employer.

Develop a video about adult learning needs in the workplace and have literacy personnel show it to industry.

What are some things the employer can do to improve literacy in the workplace?

Possibly retrain people by increasing employees' literacy in ways that would be more consistent with their needs.
Have programs to upgrade skills of employees in the company.
It might help if they would work more with education-based programs.
Make some kind of commitment to improving the literacy problems.
Maybe businesses could become more involved with adult literacy programs not only in the workplace, but in the community as well.
Initiate programs funded by employers or partially funded that give employees incentive for improving themselves as good employees.
Employers can save money in the long run by helping employees learn to be literate.

Part II:

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

"Never say it is too late . . that is a cop-out."
—A delegate

As expressed by the delegates to the Second Iowa Adult Literacy Congress

My name is David Schroeder. I am 47 years old. I've lived in Mason City about 2 years and I've worked at General Foods for about 1 year and have class 1 or 2 times a week. I think I am doing some what better and my family is proud of me. Now I can read directions. It makes me feel good about myself.

David Schroeder
Mason City

The day of the Congress was a great experience for me. I learned a lot. I saw people like me learning to read at all ages. I would like to go again. It gave me more self esteem to go on. Some of the people I met are still my friends. I found a lot of love there.

Ruth Scott
Waterloo

I from Spain. I live in this country for 22 years, married with two children in college. I worked in Fort Dodge in the factory for 19 years. I teached myself to read English but writing and spelling is very difficult for me. When CR2 closed down this year, I find it very hard to get other job because I not had high school or GED.

Then I went to the Learning Center for help. The counselor find the tutor for help me to learn English.

I do better now learning. It is good program.

Rosemary Young
Fort Dodge

I feel that this reading program has helped me a lot and it is a wonderful thing that this program is available to people such as myself. I now am able to read fast enough to make reading enjoyable. It has changed my life.

William E. Bass
Lake City, MN
(originally from Milford)

Seven years ago I was a 4th grade reader. I was in my junior year of college when I was found out. That is when I started getting help from Sister Mary McCarthy. Sister worked with me for about 2 1/2 years or so and then I went back to college. Now I have completed my 4 years of college at Buena Vista College at the Fort Dodge Campus in December of '92.

Last year I was lucky enough to attend the Adult National Literacy Congress in Washington D.C. This was a great experience.

I met a lot of new readers from all over the United States. I believe that being able to read has helped my job performance, and I have been able to recognize and help other new readers through my job and the Iowa Central Community College Literacy Board of which I am a member.

It is a pleasure I have never known before, to be able to sit down and read the newspaper or a book when I want to.

I appreciate all the support that the Iowa Board of Education and the community colleges have given to new readers, as well as all of the volunteers involved in the programs.

Thank you again.

Steven D. Bartmann, Sr.
Fort Dodge

I graduated in 1972 from Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs, Iowa. I did not feel like I had gotten the education that I needed. I had lots of problems in math, spelling and reading. When I tried to help my daughter with her homework, I felt like a failure. I also had to take my driver's license test exam orally because I couldn't read the test very well.

The Iowa Western Community College Adult Literacy program has been a great opportunity for people like me who have trouble with reading and writing.

Kenton Franke
Council Bluffs

I am 52 years old. I am from Redfield, Iowa. I started school when I was 4 years old. My father took me out of school at the age of 14, and I have been on my own ever since. I have never been able to read or write, and I believe that this has caused me to live in pure living hell.

I have been in the program over a year. What I love about it is they treat me like a real person and not a thing. Now I can read and write a little. Without this program I still wouldn't know anything.

Charles Ramsey
Redfield

(Charles Ramsey died of burns and smoke inhalation on January 12, 1993.)

I am married and have one girl and two boys. My girls name is Tammy and she is a graduate of Dakota Wesleyan. She works as a psychologist at the Catholic Church for Retarded People. My boys are Billie and Rob. Billie is an Iowa Western Community College (IWCC) graduate and is working at DNL as a computer draftsman. Rob is still in college at Iowa Western. He would like to be in electronics. My wife works for Iowa Western Community College.

I have a high school diploma and a two-year degree in diesel mechanics from IWCC. When I graduated from Underwood School in 8th grade, I was told I could not go to High School there because my reading and spelling were not good enough. I did not go back to school for 3 years. A man named R. J. Heckle (Superintendent of Carson-Macedonia) insisted I go back to school. I got a lot of help and took easy courses to get my diploma. When I was in the Diesel program at IWCC, a man named Al Hickey, tried to get help for me. The lady got sick so it never got done.

Now I am 48 and still can't read or spell. The Iowa Western Literacy Program has been my oasis for the last 3 months and I really enjoy it.

Clifford R. Pracht
Council Bluffs

Two years ago I was without a job. Now I'm working for Metz Baking. I started in September 19, 1990. When I started I was at the bottom of the pay scale making $5.50 an hour and with no insurance. Now I have insurance and I'm making $9.00 an hour.

The workplace is different from at home. I have to know how to read the panel board. There is no one standing near to read it for me. I am given chances to prove myself in the workplace.

The turning point at home was when the family members realized my job is my livelihood. They would let me sleep during the day instead of waking me up for a dollar or to ask where their clothes are.

I can't help my children with their homework. But, I can read stories and nursery rhymes to my granddaughter.

I'm proud to be in the literacy program.

Sharon K. Smith
Sioux City

Joe's Story

For five years I tried to find a tutor. I found one and she had an emergency and never returned.

I have missed out on good jobs because I do not have a diploma. Promises are all I got. I checked it off.

After many phone calls that were never returned, schools, churches, other places and no one helped me.

I saw an advertisement "Hooked-on-Phonics". I called and they wanted more than $200.00. I couldn't do it.

I called the library and was placed on a list. I harped at a lady at the library and she gave me Dee Hains name.

Dee said she would call me in a week, I checked off her name. I knew no one would call. Two days later Dee called. She pretested me. I didn't like the test. I checked it off. Back to the drawing board. Dee said she knew a person who might help me and she called her.

One night a woman named Theresa called. She's good to me. She's helping me a lot. She's got a lot of patience.

My problem started in kindergarten. I always had trouble in grade school. No one taught me. Mostly, someone was told to help Joe. I barely made high school.

Many teachers just want the money. I missed 6 months of high school. My dad was ill. I got a job at $1.25 an hour. I had so much money I didn't know what to do. School was over.

I love helping people. I'm going to get a diploma. I know I can do it.

My tutor Theresa is going to see me through. Dee Hains will also continue to help me.

Dee Hains is the Literacy Coordinator at the Career Assistance Center, Scott Community College.

Joe Rebarcak
Davenport

Literacy has helped me to read the newspaper and books.

I get books at the library to read to my two year old son, Haven, while my husband is at work during the day.

I have learned to decorate cakes. I made cakes for my family. I like to cook, look at cook books and read recipes.

Math has been fun and easier this year. I started selling Watkins products. I use my math when adding up the quantities.

I am looking forward to doing more reading on my own.

Kathy Carlson
Ames

Have you ever had to ask a stranger to read a greeting card for you? I have because I've had trouble reading and writing my whole life. My family protected me and tried to hide my problem. Therefore I didn't know how big my problem was until I went out into the world. I found out I couldn't read a newspaper, a recipe, signs, or a letter from a friend. I couldn't even fill out a job application. Then I decided to do something about it. I learned about the Drake Adult Reading Learning Center and I enrolled. Now a whole new world has opened up for me. My tutor and I are both proud of the progress I've made, although I know I have a long way to go.

I never knew how much fun it is to read and write. So I say to you all, it is up to you. No one can do it for you.

Alissa Walker
Des Moines

Have You Ever Been Clinically Dead?

Prior to my Cardiac Arrest July 1980, I had everything going for me at 16 1/2 years of age I completed 10th grade as a honor student at Manson High School. I played on first team of every sport, in swing choir, speech and drama president and played three instruments in Band and then there was as nothing.

What would you do if you woke up a stranger to yourself? I have had those experiences and more.

When I started my recovery from Aphasia, I was a two year old in a sixteen year old body. First I had a tutor to help me learn to read, Dick and Jane type books, then I progressed to the Vess Program at Iowa Central Community College (ICCC) in Fort Dodge which gave me my High School credits that I needed. Next I attended Amarillo College, in Amarillo, Texas, then finished in the ICE Program at ICCC in Fort Dodge and graduated. Now I am working with a tutor to upgrade my spelling skills and reading. Even with all this effort it has taken me twelve years to find a job. I lost the majority of my friends, felt isolated from the mainstream of life and had many embarrassing experiences. Through all of this my parents and family were supportive, spending many hours, much energy and money to help my recovery. I appreciate having the literacy program available.

Karen J. Cirks
Manson

In school I was a good "copier", meaning that I could follow someone else. I had some teachers who were not really interested and some teachers who were too interested. I lost interest I would prefer to go to a vocational class. I graduated with a diploma in 1976. I went to work and found that a person needs to know how to read in real life.

But it wasn't until 1985 when I had a nervous breakdown that I went to learn how to read. I started and stopped several different times because of divorce, bankruptcy and death of my son.

In 1990 I started back and I'm still continuing. Since I've been able to read so much better than when I started, my life has changed towards the good. My job has gotten better, with more money and more enjoyable.

It's easier to:

pay bills
write checks
take a trip
help read letters
know more about the law

P.S. And now my job is a patternmaker instead of a copier. Pattern maker or jig maker.

Erik L. Nord
Clinton

My name is Dale Warren. I am 70 years old. I am a new reader. When I couldn't read, my family was ashamed of me. It made me sad. I was mad at myself. I had to have my wife fill out job applications. They never knew I couldn't read. I feel better now because I can read signs along the road. I couldn't have done as well as I have without my wife's help. My tutor has been a big help to me.

I feel more important now that I can read. People use to say "Hey - you're a good worker - but, why can't you read?" I felt downhearted. Now I'm beginning to feel better.

God is with me at all times because he is helping me.

Gave a talk at a Lions Club one night and later in the program a man admitted he couldn't read and that surprised his co-workers. People are surprised one can survive, but I had a lot of good breaks, but now I can see you really need to learn to make it today. There's so many signs I still can't read that could mean life or death - My wife and I pray that all children at least learn to read and do simple math.

Kenneth Dale Warren
Mason City

I am a new reader. This is the second Iowa Adult Literacy Congress for me. I'm 42 years old. I'm married and have three children and my occupation is farmer.

I got involved in the reading program to help me read. So I can enjoy reading to my children and help them read too. It is most important for my girls to be good readers.

Being a new reader is helping me with my self-esteem and to enjoy life. It helps to be closer with my family and friends.

A important part of the Iowa Adult Literacy program are tutors. Thanks for all your help.

Gerald Eitzen
Clarinda

When I came to the United States in 1987, I didn't speak the English language. I went to Florida for four years and worked with my family. I didn't study English while I was there. In December of 1990, I moved to Waterloo, Iowa, and enrolled in the tutor program. Learning to read has helped me with my job. My supervisor at work supports me in learning to read better. My job is as a resident counselor at Quakerdale, a juvenile home.

Abdo Al Jamal
Waterloo

During the past year, several things in my life have changed because of my improved reading. My reading is noticeable at work as I do not ask as many questions about how to do things. I am able to take orders and phone calls easier now.

During a recent trip, I was able to read some of the town names we passed. I was able to also read a map better than before.

Marie Lynch
Ames

My name is Ray. I can speak both English and Spanish but I never learned to read or write in either language. I never had the chance to go to school because we had a large family and I had to go to work as a young child. I'm still learning to read but I am very proud that I have stayed with it, and I feel very good about my ability to learn to read and write.

My wife, Donna, and my tutor, Meryle Smith, tell me they are very proud of my progress. But that they are proudest when they see the pride I take in my accomplishment.

Ray Mancillas
Marshalltown

I am a home maker and mother. I enjoy spending time with the family. We go for walks, play games and sports. I am a very happy person.

I am from Southeastern Community College (S.C.C.) and I attended the first Iowa Adult Literacy Congress. I began the Laubach Reading Program about three years ago. I was having difficulty distinguishing between two sounds. I have completed the Laubach Skills Book 4. Now I am even happier, because I am reading novels.

I would like to say thanks to my tutor and all the tutors for caring and participating in the volunteer reading program.

Theoma Osborn
Burlington

Myself

I am female. I am 44 years old born 12-20-47. My eyes are blue and hair is blond. I like the color blue and brown. I like to sew and work hard. I'm going to school to learn how to read and write and get my GED so I can get a good job.

Judith Card
Waterloo

I really think it is very good to have this program. When I came from Korea in 1969 I did not know any English. My husband is American and we have one girl and one boy. My daughter has graduated from college and my son has one more year to go. After I got here I didn't have time to learn English but right now I have time so I am learning English and I wish to get in the G.E.D. class. I hope this program will keep going as English is so hard for me to learn.

Jeannie Barker
Benton
(unable to attend the congress)

I should have learned how to read in school. I am 23 and now I want to learn and it is fun. My self-esteem has progressed and I feel more comfortable about myself. After I get my G.E.D., I can do a lot with my life.

Don't let people tell you that you can't do it. You just need to have someone who cares. Learn how to read no matter how old you are. You can get mad and want to quit but don't. Paul Overstreet has a song out, "Billy Can't Read". Some of us know how that feels. Now Billy **can** read and we too will learn to read and feel better about ourselves.

Tami Norton
Burlington

I was sick when I was little and I had a teacher that wouldn't teach and now I am learning.

Sandra F. Luck
Waterloo

I've been employed at Ennis Business forms in DeWitt for 17 years. I've been married for 13 years and have 2 boys ages 8 and 4. The literacy program has given me the confidence and self-worth that I lacked for many years. I feel I have finally become a whole person and am looking forward to the rest of my life.

Rodney King
DeWitt

In going to class, first of all has made me feel better about myself. And is giving me a better chance in obtaining a better job. I appreciate the support that I get from the instructors and my family.

Joann Foreman
Ottumwa

I can't read! That's OK! I've got guts! With this inconvenience, it's been hard, but only when there's been reading or writing involved, but that is only a small part of your life.

Robert Sereg
Des Moines

At the age of 59 I wanted to learn how to read. So I called the Iowa Lakes Community College learning center.

Since my reading was so poor I was placed in Laubach book one. I have completed all four books. It took two and 1/2 years. It makes me feel good about myself. I don't have to hide in my shadow any more. My wife and sons are proud of me and that makes me feel good.

Glenn Storm
Spencer

The reason I'm in the Adult Literacy Program is that I had a severe stroke, in October 26, 1987. The Language part of my brain was destroyed. That means all of my reading, writing, talking, and math skills was gone. I couldn't do the alphabet or say my name, all that came out was I-I-I. I had to take Speech Therapy. My therapist knew of the Adult Literacy Program in our community, she said, "they could help me." So I have been in the program since 1988.

After the stroke my self-esteem was real poor. I didn't want to talk to people or to be seen by people. I WAS DIFFERENT NOW. Before, I didn't know a stranger. I just wanted to hide under a rock, at all times. But after, I was in the program, my teachers gave me confidence with my reading, writing and talking.

In May 1988, I was in Iowa City for some testing at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinic. I had three or four hours to kill, so I thought I could take a bus downtown. But, I couldn't read the schedule for the bus route. I asked a man about the bus schedule. He said, "Can't You Read," and I said, "No, I Can't Read." I was so humiliated. Later on that day, I wanted to call home. I couldn't read the direction either. Finally, I ask her to call for me. I was crying because I was so helpless. I have a lot of comprehension problems from the stroke. I understand how people feel, if they can't read. My teachers have been real understanding and want to help me in situations I have trouble in.

As of 1991, I have been working twice a month at "The Gifts of the Heartland" in Keosauqua. It gets me out in the community and helps me to meet new people and also I have money to handle. In 1992, I started teaching Sunday School for the three to seven year old children. Those little children don't mind if I have to read things the second time. I just say, "Ronda will have to do it over again," and we all laugh. I've been taking a Computer Class sponsored by Indian Hills Community College. I'm real slow, can't spell, and can't remember 4 letters at a time, but I just love the computer course.

The program has made a difference in my life. I thank GOD for my progress, and for the many people that help to make the Adult Literacy Program successful.

Ronda L. Snelling
Keosauqua

I think this program is good for people. I then decided I can now read because I can read my lessons. My teacher has taught me a lot.

I am a mom of three girls. The twins will be 10 the 29th of this month and Marie is 11 and in 6th grade. The twins are Jenny and Jodie. I have a parakeet and his name is Lucky. He lost his mate so he is unhappy.

I have a cat called Tomisino. He is called a max bah cat. He is mixed with wildcat and has a short tail. His mom came from Texas.

Cindy Gwinn
Russell

I find that the Literacy class is helping me because I am reading more and I like it. I am doing this to help my kids and to find a good job. I have been married for four years.

It is not easy for me because everyone in my family can read. It is hard keeping this away from my husband. I am glad that I am in this class because I am going to go to school someday.

Lynn Groethe
Akron

(Lynn says she has told her husband and it went better than she thought. He is helping her.)

My name is Boalee Galle. I was born in Thailand. I'm a mother of three. I came to the United States 19 years ago. I want to learn to read and write better so I can communicate with my family and friends.

Boalee Galle
Dubuque

My name is Bobby L. Jenkins. I am 40 years old. I have been going to Lincoln Learning Center for 2 1/2 years. I am going there to better myself. I need to read better to get a better job and to teach others to read. I didn't have the chance to do this when I was growing up. Someone told me about the Lincoln Learning Center. I am proud to be going there.

Bobby L. Jenkins
Cedar Rapids
(unable to attend congress)

My name is Linda Bruce. I am 44 years old, I've been married for 27 years and have five children and the youngest of which is 12 years old.

I dropped out of school at the end of eighth grade because the teachers never seemed to have time to help me. I had problems reading, spelling, and with my math all through school but they never seemed to care. All through the years I've had the same problems, because of this when my kids came home from school and needed help to understand their school work I couldn't help them, because I couldn't read what they already learned to read in grade school. Because of this I felt hurt and stupid, and have called myself stupid all through the years since.

After my husband went back and got his G.E.D., I started to think about trying to get mine, but I thought it would be too hard, so I've waited until now. Now I am determined to get my G.E.D. So I called Lincoln Learning Center and talked to a very nice and understanding woman named Sara who found me a real nice tutor who really cares about helping me to learn to read so I can get my G.E.D. I alsc go up to Lincoln and use the computers to help with my reading and spelling.

I feel that this program and my tutor is helping me a lot, I no longer think of myself as being stupid even though I know I have a lot to learn yet to get my G.E.D. I would like to complete my education because I would like to have a better job so I can better my family and myself.

Linda Bruce
Cedar Rapids

Hi, my name is Steven. I am 39 years old. I was laid off from my job in the summer of 1991.

I was scared because of my lack of ability to read and write. I knew I would be limited in the job market. So when I went down to the unemployment line, I had to ask for assistance.

And at that time, my sister was there too. She had told me that I should better myself because of the job market and she had mentioned a program that could help me learn to read and write.

So I took it upon myself and did it!

Now, that I am in the literacy program, I have learned on the one on one basis. Which was unlike school.

When I was in school I had to be placed in the special education class, and there were more students in one classroom. So they didn't really have the time I needed.

With this literacy program I'm more confident in myself.

Reading and writing is easier for me.

I want to continue my education, so I can have a better job, also now I like to read novels, and understand the words and the stories.

Thank you.

Steven Ellis
Cedar Rapids

After attending the first and second Adult Literacy Congresses, I find it very awarding to be part of this event. To be asked to be a presenter at the second congress makes it all the more special.

In 1985 when I found I was dyslexic and not the only person who was struggling with reading in this world, my life has changed. The growth was slow. I have come a long way since 1985 to be able to tell my story to any group that will listen, and in turn, helping others has given me even more growth. I know what I want to do with my life, to be a role model, to help others like myself. Thank you.

Archie Willard
Eagle Grove

I have always wanted to read good but I stopped school in the eighth grade to work. There were five of us kids and my mother was alone at that time. Then I got married but still had to work.

So I said to myself, if God would bless me with one wish it would be to tell someone that cannot read to please go back to school like I did. I am very proud of myself. My teacher was so patient with me - kind, loving, and understanding.

Mazell Reed
Waterloo

I believe (adult) education is very important for everyone to use in their own personal daily lives. Education has so many great pay-offs. It's not only good for the mind, but for your spirit, soul, and for your self-confidence and self-esteem. I have been able to help my children with their homework. Something that I couldn't do before and I was ashamed of that. I've also been able to help other people spell, fill out an application, and just help out with what I've learned.

For those of us that can continue learning its a great asset because I've learned I can change careers and be independent for myself. The rewards of being able to help others and reach out to them is a great feeling inside. I would like to thank you and everyone else involved in this organization because what I came home with that day from this event was that, "I **can** do it and feel good about it". I'm still working on my skills because I plan to become an accountant. This was just a dream of mine back then - Today, I'm choosing to make this dream come true for me. I know it takes lots of patience and I ask God to help me with this because I learned I **can do it!** Trust Yourself! Education has made a big difference in my life and today I'm grateful I am furthering my education. Thanks so much for everything and to everyone for getting involved.

I forgot one more important thing, when I watch the world news on T.V. I know where all these places are instead of guessing or just imagining where they are at. This is all because of my education.

Linda Sánchez
Sioux City

In 1989 I was tired of not being able to read very good. So I found out that the Ames library had an adult literacy program and I signed up. My tutor helped me learn phonics. We worked on the Commercial Drivers License manual so I could pass the CDL test to keep my job.

Since then I'm learning to read better. I read magazine articles and newspaper editorials. My tutor and I talk about what I read. We talk about political subjects and truck driving and history and science and we have different opinions in our discussions. I have read three books and I am reading one now. And I thank my tutor and this program so much and especially my tutor who has taken time out of her life to make my life easier.

Tom Franksain
Kelley

The Second Adult Literacy Congress
September 10-12, 1992
Des Moines, IA

Delegate Photo

Row 1, Left to Right:
Theoma Osborn, Dale Warren, Mazell Reed, Tami Norton, Linda Bruce, Sandra Luck, Rosemary Young, Linda Sanchez, Ronda Snelling

Row 2, L to R:
David Schroeder, Rodney King, Steve Ellis, Karen Cirks, Abdo Al-Jamal, Cindy Gwinn, Judy Card, Boalee Gallee

Row 3, L to R:
Allissa Walker, Archie Willard, JoAnn Foreman, Ray Mancillas, Ruty Scott, Kathy Carlson, Glenn Storm

Row 4, L to R:
Bob Clausen, Erik Nord, Joe Rebarcak, James Paxton, Lynn Groethe, Kenton Franke, Marie Lynch

Row 5, L to R:
Sharon Smith, Steve Bartmann, Sr., Bill Bass, Tom Franksain, Don Fuss, Cliff Pracht, Gerald Eitzen

Not pictured: Chuck Ramsey, Robert Sereg